

Sonoma Valley Groundwater Management Planning Basin Advisory Panel Charter

Approved 10/16/2006

Purpose and Goals

The purpose of the Basin Advisory Panel is to develop a Groundwater Management Plan for the Sonoma Valley. The Panel will recommend the plan for adoption by local elected officials. To this end, the goals of the group are to:

- Work collaboratively with other Panel members who represent groundwater users and interests from throughout the entire Sonoma Valley.
- Develop common understanding on current and future water needs and resources in the Sonoma Valley.
- Support development of basin management objectives to protect resources in a sustainable manner, ensure local control, address current and future local water needs, and support the economy and environment.
- Negotiate in good faith to achieve consensus on how Sonoma Valley groundwater will be managed into the future.

Membership

The Basin Advisory Panel consists of members that represent the following interest groups:

- Groundwater users: growers, dairies and residential
- Economic interests
- Local government
- Water providers
- Environmental and community organizations

Members live throughout the Valley and from the City of Sonoma or work in agencies that have jurisdiction in the Sonoma Valley.

Additional stakeholders may join the Basin Advisory Panel after its initial formation with the concurrence of other Panel members. Member organizations may change their individual representatives if necessary by notifying the project manager or facilitator.

Stakeholder Structure

The primary decision-making body is the Basin Advisory Panel. The Panel will guide development of the Groundwater Management Plan with assistance from a technical consultant, facilitator and project manager.

Roles and Responsibilities

Basin Advisory Panel

The Basin Advisory Panel will work in partnership with the Sonoma County Water Agency and its cooperating partners to develop a non-regulatory groundwater management plan. The Basin Advisory Panel will guide development of the plan, which the technical consultants will write. The panel has a collaborative governance structure: agencies with jurisdiction within the Sonoma Valley will join community organizations, business associations, and individuals to develop the Groundwater Management Plan. After approving the completed Groundwater Management Plan, the Panel will recommend the plan for adoption by the boards of the responsible agencies, represented by the Cooperating Partners.

As part of membership, **Panel members** agree to:

- Arrive at each meeting fully prepared to discuss the issues on the agenda. Preparation would include reviewing meeting summaries, technical information, and draft documents distributed in advance of each meeting.
- Present their constituent members' views on the issues being discussed and be willing to engage in respectful, constructive dialogue with other members of the working group.
- Develop a problem-solving approach in which they consider the interests and viewpoints of all group members, in addition to their own.
- Keep their constituencies informed about the deliberations and actively seek their constituents' input.

Convener

The Sonoma County Water Agency is convening the Basin Advisory Panel and is serving as the *lead agency* as required by Assembly Bill 3030 for developing non-regulatory groundwater management plans. The convener will sponsor Panel meetings, garner necessary funding to complete the project, and provide in-kind staff support to manage the project. In addition, the convener has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the California Department of Water Resources to secure facilitation services with the Center for Collaborative Policy and entered into a contract with the technical consultant Schlumberger to write the plan and perform technical analyses. The convener will also coordinate, as appropriate, with the cooperating partners, over the life of the project to ensure continued support and involvement in developing the Groundwater Management Plan.

Cooperating Partners

The Sonoma County Water Agency has formed a cooperative partnership with the County of Sonoma, City of Sonoma, Valley of the Moon Water District, and Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District. The cooperating partners will provide in-kind staff participation in the Basin Advisory Panel. In addition, the partners have provided funding to support development of the groundwater management plan. Once approved by the Panel, the cooperating partners will consider adopting the Sonoma Valley Groundwater Management Plan.

Work Groups or Subcommittees

The Basin Advisory Panel can form subcommittees or work groups to assist with its work of developing the groundwater management plan. Members of the subcommittee or work group need not be members of the Basin Advisory Panel. The subcommittees may develop recommendations or proposals for the full stakeholder group's consideration.

Project Manager

Bill Keene from the Sonoma County Water Agency will serve as the project manager for the Basin Advisory Panel and groundwater management plan. Bill will interface with the technical consultant and facilitator to ensure that meetings are efficient and work is completed in a timely fashion. Bill will ensure quality control of the plan and assist in making sure that the plan reflects stakeholder agreement. Bill will also work with stakeholders to negotiate agreements to be included in the plan. Finally, the project manager will facilitate public and media outreach for the Basin Advisory Panel.

Technical Consultant

The technical consultant has a contract with the Sonoma County Water Agency to write the groundwater management plan and perform all related technical analyses. The technical consultant will attend Basin Advisory Panel meetings, present information necessary for Panel members to be able to contribute to the plan and strive to balance stakeholder input with sound technical judgment.

Chair

The chair for the Basin Advisory Panel agrees to:

- Work with the facilitator to develop the agenda for all meetings.
- Assist in building consensus among members.
- Brief elected officials on the nature and progress of the Panel at key milestones.
- Serve as the media spokesperson in cooperation with the project manager.

Facilitator

In cooperation with all stakeholders, the facilitator from the Center for Collaborative Policy would design Panel meetings and guide the overall process toward achieving its mutually agreed-upon purpose and goals. The facilitator will:

- Formulate the agenda and desired outcomes for all meetings based on input of stakeholders and the chair and facilitate those proceedings.
- Identify and synthesize points of agreement and disagreement for the written meeting summaries.
- Assist in building consensus among members.
- Ensure compliance with all ground rules.
- Serve as a confidential communication channel for members, alternates, and observers who wish to express views privately because they do not feel comfortable doing so in front of the large group.
- Advocate for a fair, effective, and credible process, but remain impartial with respect to the outcome of the deliberations.

Work Plan Overview

The Basin Advisory Panel will work for 16-18 months to develop the groundwater management plan. The key tasks for the panel are listed below.

Timeframe	Basin Advisory Panel Key Tasks
Sept 2006 – Feb 2007	Collaborative Governance and Group Charter Public Outreach Plan Education and Information Needs on Groundwater and the Sonoma Valley Basin Groundwater Management Goals and Basin Management Objectives
March - July 2007	Monitoring and Data Collection Protocols
July – Dec 2007	Implementation Plan
Nov – Dec 2007	Review and Finalize Groundwater Management Plan

Meeting Schedule

The Panel agrees to hold meetings on the third Monday of each month during the afternoon in 2006 and the fourth Thursdays of each month in 2007 and to meet occasionally at other times for workshops. Periodically, the Panel may need to hold a special meeting or change the date should the need arise. For now, the regularly scheduled meetings are as follows:

Aug 14, 2006

Sept 18, 2006

Oct 16, 2006

Nov 20, 2006

Jan 25, 2007

Feb 2007

March 22, 2007

April 26, 2007

May 31, 2007

June 28, 2007

July 26, 2007

August – No Meeting

September 27, 2007

October 25, 2007

November 29, 2007 (Note: Fifth week to
avoid Thanksgiving)

December – No Meeting

2008—To be Determined

Attendance

Given the volume of information to be considered, regular attendance by the member or his/her designated representative is essential. Designees must be identified in advance, fully briefed and able to represent the member during decision making.

Communication

Media. Members are asked to speak only for their organization or themselves when asked by external parties, including the media, about the Basin Advisory Panel's progress, unless there has been a formal adoption of a statement, concepts, or recommendations by the Basin Advisory Panel. Stakeholders will refer media inquiries to Project Manager Bill Keene and reserve freedom to express their own opinions to media representatives. Participants should be careful to present only their own views and not those of other participants of the stakeholder group. The temptation to discuss someone else's statements or position should be avoided.

Constituents. Members are asked to keep their constituents informed about the process and to bring constituent's views into the discussion. Staff will be available to provide presentations of the Panel's work at meetings, conferences or other venues. Members are strongly encouraged to provide or arrange presentations about the Panel's work wherever feasible to increase awareness.

Decision Makers. The Sonoma County Water Agency and the Basin Advisory Panel chair will provide periodic updates to the SCWA Board of Directors (also the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors). Basin Advisory Panel members may also decide to brief elected officials and other decision makers at strategic points during the process.

Meeting Summaries. The project manager and facilitator will provide meetings summaries following each Basin Advisory Panel meeting.

Public Engagement and Outreach

All Basin Advisory Panel meetings will be open to the public, and the public is welcome to participate in Panel conversations. The facilitator may limit public comment to a designated public comment period if necessary to assure the Panel can complete its work in a timely fashion.

Early in the process, the Panel will oversee development of a public outreach plan which will guide activities related to public engagement and outreach.

Basin Advisory Panel Decision-Making

- 1) **Consensus as the Fundamental Principle:** The Panel shall strive for consensus (agreement among all participants) in all of its decision-making. Working toward consensus is a fundamental principle.
- 2) **Definition of “Consensus”:** Consensus means that all group members either fully support or can live with the decision or overall plan and believe that their constituents can as well. In reaching consensus, some Panel members may strongly endorse a particular proposal while others may accept it as "workable." Others may be only able to “live with it.” Still others may choose to “stand aside” by verbally noting a disagreement, yet allowing the group to reach a consensus without them if the decision does not affect them or compromise their interests. Any of these actions still constitutes consensus.
- 3) **Less than 100% Consensus Decision Making:** The Panel is consensus seeking and shall not limit itself to strict consensus if 100% agreement among all participants cannot be reached after all interests and options have been thoroughly identified, explored, and discussed. Less-than-consensus decision-making shall not be undertaken lightly. If, after full exploration, the Basin Advisory Panel cannot come to 100% agreement, the Panel would form a subcommittee to develop a consensus proposal for the Basin Advisory Panel to consider and approve. The subcommittee would consist of the following Panel members:
 - One of the four following public agencies: City of Sonoma Public Works, Sonoma County PRMD, Sonoma County Water Agency, Valley of the Moon Water District
 - One of the three following non-governmental organizations: Sonoma Ecology Center, West Valley Alliance, and Valley of the Moon Alliance
 - One of the agricultural/dairy representatives
 - The project manager
 - The chair

Other Panel members could participate in subcommittee discussions although the goal would be to have a small representative group. In addition to forming the subcommittee, members could also caucus in their interest groups to ensure that the representatives fully understand the perspectives of interest group members and to test proposals and ideas under development and before bringing them to the full Panel.

- 4) **Decision Outcomes.** All reports and products of the Panel will reflect the outcome of stakeholder discussions. All agreements and negotiated outcomes will be reflected in the Groundwater Management Plan.

Ground Rules

The Panel will use the following standing ground rules to establish a productive protocol for meetings and may modify them as appropriate.

The Panel agrees to:

- Listen and openly discuss issues with others who hold diverse views.
- View disagreements as problems to be solved rather than battles to be won.
- Refrain from ascribing motives or intentions to other participants.
- Respect the integrity and values of other participants.

During the meetings, the Panel agrees to:

- Honor time.
- Use conversational courtesy.
- Keep pagers and mobile phones silent during meetings and return calls during breaks.
- Appreciate humor, but not engage in humor at the expense of others.

Approving the Groundwater Management Plan

The Sonoma Valley Groundwater Management Plan is to be approved by the Basin Advisory Panel and adopted by the Sonoma County Water Agency Board of Directors, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, City of Sonoma City Counsel, and Valley of the Moon Water District Board of Directors. The Plan shall not go forward to the adopters until Panel members have approved the plan using its decision-making process outlined above.

Amendments to this Charter

The Basin Advisory Panel may use its decision-making procedure, identified above, to adopt changes to this Charter.